

VZCZCXRO3886
PP RUEHFL RUEHKW RUEHLA RUEHNP RUEHROV RUEHSR
DE RUEHLJ #0515 3231653
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 181653Z NOV 08
FM AMEMBASSY LJUBLJANA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7039
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L LJUBLJANA 000515

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EUR/ERA, EUR/CE, EUR/SCE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/18/2018

TAGS: [PREL](#) [EUN](#) [PBTS](#) [HR](#) [SI](#)

SUBJECT: SLOVENIA SUPPORTS CROATIA'S ACCESSION TO THE EU -
BUT INSISTS NO PREJUDGEMENT OF BORDER ISSUES

REF: A. ZAGREB 785

[1](#)B. ZAGREB 762

Classified By: Amb. Yousif B. Ghafari, Reasons 1.4 (b,d)

[1](#)1. (U) In a video interview posted on-line November 14, PM Pahor's candidate for Minister of Foreign Affairs, Samuel Zbogar, stated that Slovenia's position regarding Croatia's EU accession would not change with the incoming government. According to Zbogar, Slovenia supports Croatia's accession, but "what matters is that no action taken by Croatia in accession talks may harm Slovenia's interests in the eventual resolution" of the Croatia/Slovenia border dispute. Zbogar's interview followed recent press stories explaining that Slovenia had requested that Croatia withdraw from its EU accession package any documents or references that "prejudge the border" determination. Because Croatia did not do so, Slovenia did not consent to open new negotiating chapters.

[1](#)2. (C) Head of the MFA's Division of Division for Southeastern Europe Leon Marc stressed to Emboff that Slovenia supported Croatia's accession; however, Slovenia could not let Croatia use its EU accession process to try to further its case in what was a bilateral dispute. Marc said that Slovenia would "be delighted" for the chapters to be opened - as soon as Croatia withdrew the offending documents. He noted that the ball was in Croatia's court to respond to Slovenia's request, which had been made some time ago.

Comment

[1](#)3. (C) Slovenian contacts have acknowledged that Slovenia did not tell its side of the story well with regard to its withholding consent to open new chapters. This is probably due to Slovenia's transition to a new government. However, the statement from incoming Minister Zbogar affirming the former government's position is clear. Zbogar's statement underscores that Slovenia would be very unlikely to bend to any pressure brought to bear by other EU member-states on what Slovenia views as a bilateral issue. Slovenes view Croatia as trying to use the EU process to gain ground in the long-standing bilateral dispute. The Slovenes, on the other hand, are essentially asking that references to the border be placed -- metaphorically -- in brackets. Post recommends not getting involved in the issue at this time.

GHAFARI